

Watershed Implementation Plan for Fairview Beach (Potomac River) in King George County  
February 20, 2014  
Smoot Memorial Library, 6:00 pm  
First Public Meeting

Attendees:

Nancy Haenlein, citizen  
Charlie Lunsford, DEQ - CO  
Steve Valentine, VDH  
Mike Bennett, Fairview Beach Residents Association  
Herb Cover, citizen  
Jim Palmer, ICPRB  
Janet Gayle Harris, citizen  
Charlie Lively, TCCSWCD  
Elizabeth Strank, citizen  
Janet Harrover, citizen  
Don Pfalzgraf, citizen  
Chris Thomas, KGCSA  
Jim Howard, KG Supervisor  
Ross Mandel, ICPRB  
Frank and Salli Hartner, citizens  
Tom Hudson, citizen  
Jim Lund, citizen  
Matt Skiljo, VDH - Richmond  
Bryant Thomas, DEQ-NRO  
Thomas T. Thompson, VDH  
May Sligh, DEQ-PRO  
Rebecca Shoemaker, DEQ-NRO  
Jen Carlson, DEQ-NRO

The meeting began at 6pm. Michael Bennett, representing the Fairview Beach Association, of which many of the citizens are members, welcomed attendees and introduced May Sligh. Presentations were given by the consultant, ICPRB and DEQ staff. The working group session began right after the formal presentations. For the most part, meeting comments followed the question guidelines provided to each attendee (in bold below).

Initial Comments:

- Can we say that there are likely two known 'hot spots' (Pavilion and 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> streets) and there may be others? (Ross replied yes)
- There are drainage issues related to construction above 6<sup>th</sup> Street; will runoff be a part of this program? (May replied yes, if runoff contributes to bacteria loading and there is land on which BMPs can be implemented).
- Can we look at the impacts of the seawalls that were installed to control erosion? Will this project support installation of seawalls? (May noted that these structures are intended for sediment reduction from beach erosion. There may be instances where such structures are connected to bacteria reduction needs associated with this project. Ross offered to evaluate the potential benefits (bacteria reductions) to improving the beach infrastructure).
- It was noted that the project will not get into surveying and engineering. It was then asked why we would apply band-aids instead of getting into the surveying and engineering that may be needed.

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**Are there any other bacteria sources besides those listed in the studies?**

- There has been an increase in wild cats in the community. Could they be contributing to the bacteria loads? There seems to be a lot of skunks in the area recently. What about them? (May replied that educational materials could be geared towards fixing cats, and we would not address wildlife concerns right away. Both likely have negligible contributions as compared to humans and pets)
- A number of people felt strongly that the infrastructure problems still existed. Finding the leaky laterals by using dye testing and/or smoke testing is strongly recommended. Who is required to be on the sewer system? (Staff will coordinate with the KGCSA on this)

**What is the local perception of straight pipes, failing systems and sewer areas in the community and are there areas where there are known problems? Are there poor soils in the area? What control measures should be used?**

- The trailer park septic systems should be a priority for connecting to sewer. Don't think they were required to connect to sewer, and those that did may still be improperly connected. The owners have had the development for a long time but it may be in the process of changing ownership, with the possibility of a townhome development. 90 townhomes were proposed at one time, so if there could be capacity for such an increase why not capacity for the trailer park? VDH thought there were some septic tanks there that were difficult to get to due to additions to the trailer structures.
- Drainfields in concave areas should also be a priority for connection or repair/replacement. Sometimes drainfields flood from runoff uphill and home downspouts that lead directly to the drainfields.
- Are there any straight pipes in Fairview Beach? (Health Department replied that there are probably not many)
- There are good sandy soils in Fairview Beach. However, there are places where the water table is close to the surface and where drainfields may have been compromised by landscaping and construction. Also the lots are very close together, so space for proper treatment may be a concern in some cases.
- BMPs are needed to address runoff and flooding problems, such as rain gardens and rain barrels, and larger drainage swales that could capture runoff, slow it down and allow it to percolate into the soil.
- In areas where homes were hooked up to sewer, there is not a record of the old septic tanks being pumped out and closed out, though there could be some instances where they exist. (VDH said not likely many of these though)
- The western section of the park has an eroding riverbank, and some is very close to some drainfields. A survey should be done to see where these homes exist. Perhaps we can track sewer system connections by tracking which households get sewer bills.

**What programs already exist to help get information to homeowners, and what methods work best for reaching citizens? Is there a need for education and outreach on septic system operation and maintenance?**

- Mailings should be sent to the owners of trailers, not the renters, to determine where problems exist and the methods for correcting them.
- The best outreach methods are newsletters, websites, educational brochures, and special events. Going door to door may be necessary. There may be opportunities to reach visitors with important information too, like picking up after pets.

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- Some residents may need information on proper septic maintenance. Residents do get pump out notices since they are in the Chesapeake Bay Act area, but not sure how well it is being enforced.
- The Tri County City Soil and Water Conservation District can help develop educational materials with VDH, and both can offer technical advice to residents on septic system maintenance. TCCSWCD may also help administer a cost share program for residents to address deficiencies in their septic systems.
- In some cases there may be assistance to help residents with the cost of connecting to sewer.

**What is the public perception about pets/dogs being a bacteria source? Are there areas of the community where composters could be promoted?**

- The community is probably divided 50/50 on whether it is important to pick up after their pets.
- For those that do not participate, offering them some educational material and leash bag holders may help, but some attendees thought that it would be tough to convince some people of the importance.
- For pet owners with dog runs, and multiple dogs, there may be an interest in using the buried composters, which break down the material by using enzymes. These could be available through a cost-share assistance program, possibly administered by the SWCD, to encourage homeowners to purchase and install them.

Note from C. Lunsford: “Buried composters” – seems to be referring to the Doggie Dooley which is actually best described as a “pet waste digester” as opposed to composter which is generally shown as an above ground process with a trash can or commercial unit. I think it is better to describe the pet waste digester being suitable for 1-4 dogs based on the models available. Pet owners with “dog runs” and “multiple dogs” implies more than 1-4 and would generally require other means of waste management than in-ground digester(s).”

**Are there areas where public dog walking takes place, and where dog bag and disposal stations could be installed?**

- The Fairview Beach Residents Association (FBRA) has worked with TCCSWCD to install 10 pet waste stations in the community, and one attendee said she keeps the bags filled. They also provide information in the “welcome packet” for new residents so they know that picking up pet waste is expected of them. One pet waste station is broken, and TCCSWCD said they could replace it for them.
- Education for boat owners on pet waste is a good idea, because some people let their dogs run on the beach once they get off their boats. One person had been seen covering up the waste, which is not appropriate, so some information and leash bag holders could be very helpful at getting the expectation across to visitors too.
- Offer leash bag holders and brochures at special events, like Aquapalooza.

**Are there concentrations of dogs, like kennels and boarding facilities, which could be considered potential sources?**

- There are not any kennels or vets in the community, but it may be helpful to use area vets to get educational material and leash bag holders distributed to citizens.
- Again, there is a concentration of cats.

**Is there a need for local ordinances?**

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- Someone stated that there is a county leash law ordinance that applies to Fairview Beach. (Post meeting research indicates that according to the Fairview Beach bylaws, dogs are required to be on a leash at all times at Fairview Beach, in compliance with county and state regulations. The bylaws also say that pets shall be under control of their owners at all times on the beach. In the event that one's dog or cat defecates on the beach, the owner is responsible for proper removal and disposal.)

**Is there a need for education and outreach on pasture management for horse owners and other animals? What is the best way to reach them?**

- There are some goats on the hill, and some well-cared for horses near the community entrance. There may be a need to reach the horse owners with pasture management information so that animals are rotated around the property to reduce soil compaction, erosion and runoff. It would be good to know how horse manure is being managed on the land too. The TCCSWCD would reach out to them with the variety of options that would suit their particular farming operation.

**Is there a concern about boat discharges near Fairview Beach? Is there a need for educational materials geared specifically for boaters? Is there a concern about boaters throwing waste overboard, or "passing the bucket"?**

- There is a concern about boat discharges in the beach area. One citizen said they'd seen "evidence" of boat waste near the shore.
- VDH said the pump out station at the marina is currently in disrepair, but that they are working with the owner to correct deficiencies. There is grant money available to them to assist with repairs.
- Often boaters come from far away. The anchor out in the Potomac River and are shuttled into land. Providing boaters with educational brochures, and with leash bag holders if they have a dog, could be very helpful. The Clean Marina Program has some material that could be used to educate boaters. A sign showing that there is a pump out station available to boaters would be a good idea too, once it is repaired. Anything that can be done to reduce the likelihood of them dumping their holding tank out in the Potomac before coming into shore would be good, since it was felt that that material may migrate toward Fairview Beach eventually.

**Are there opportunities to improve stream buffers in the area? Do you know of specific areas where this may be possible?**

- Improvements to buffers are needed along the mainstem of the Potomac, in the area where erosion problems persist. Native trees and shrubs could be used to help hold the soil in place.
- Buffers could be used in common areas of the community, but there may be also residential areas that would greatly benefit from buffers. C. Lunsford explained how he'd used native ornamental grasses along his riverfront property in the Northern Neck. Their strong root system helped reduce erosion, which was critical to property protection. The grasses also provide nutrient removal from any overland runoff, and provide songbird habitat. A citizen inquired about maintenance, and C. Lunsford advised that it was necessary to hand trim the grasses periodically. This may be a challenge, as the current maintenance approach in these common areas is to mow grasses down mechanically. The advantage of these native grasses is that they help anchor the bank, while also being low enough that residents can enjoy their river views.
- Another citizen expressed concern about the maintenance of something different than turf. They have a few bushes there, and they already have a hard time maintaining around them too. It would take some time to educate those doing the landscaping.

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- One citizen shared that they placed a native grass in their yard to help absorb runoff, and even thought it was difficult to plant each sprig by hand that it has helped soak up rainwater on their property. Plus it has been very low maintenance.

At the end of the meeting, Matt Skiljo added that the funding from EPA to monitor bacteria at Fairview Beach would no longer be available after 2014. May stated that evaluating other funding sources to carry out the monitoring after 2014 would be part of the watershed plan. As well, if 319 funds are used there is typically a monitoring component, for both hotspot and post-BMP monitoring.

The next item on the agenda was to select individuals for the Steering Committee. The representatives from the community are: Janet Harrover, Michael Bennett, Don Pfalzgraf, and Herb Cover. The group will assist with reviews of the draft document, working group ideas and presentation materials for the final public meeting, which is expected to be in **August**.

May Sligh will advise attendees of the links for presentation materials as soon as they are posted on the DEQ website. She will also advise of planned meeting dates.

The 30-day public comment period on the information presented at the meeting will end on March 24, 2014. Questions or information requests should be addressed to May Sligh with the DEQ-Piedmont Regional Office by phone at (804)450-3802 and by e-mail at [may.sligh@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:may.sligh@deq.virginia.gov) or to Jennifer Carlson with the DEQ – Northern Regional Office by phone (703)583-3859 and by e-mail at [jennifer.carlson@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:jennifer.carlson@deq.virginia.gov). Though e-mail comments are preferred, written comments and inquiries can also be submitted and should include the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting the comments. Please send to May Sligh, **Department of Environmental Quality, Piedmont Regional Office, 4949-A Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060.**